

Florida Forever Project Evaluation Report

Double G Legacy ***Sumter County***



Acquisition Type: Less-Than-Fee

Acres: 763

Just Value: \$2,296,787

Application Date: April 30, 2022

Project Sponsor: Double G Legacy LP and Gail G Wilkes

Prepared By:

Division of State Lands

Office of Environmental Services



**FLORIDA
FOREVER**

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Submitted to the Acquisition and Restoration Council
October 14, 2022

Executive Summary

The proposed Double G Legacy Florida Forever project contains 7 parcels, owned by Double G Legacy LP and Gail G Wilkes, totaling 763 acres in Sumter County. The project is located south of State Road 48 in west-central Sumter County, approximately 5 miles west of Bushnell. The proposal directly abuts the southeastern boundary of the existing Battle of Wahoo Swamp Florida Forever project. The project is proposed as a less-than-fee acquisition and has a total tax assessed value of \$2,296,787.

The property is managed as a cow-calf operation and for private recreation. The landowners have expressed their interest in helping conserve and preserve important natural and cultural resources on their property, while also continuing to enjoy the property in a manner compatible with a conservation easement. The landowner would continue to graze cattle, hunt, and access the property for outdoor recreation.

The property is located within Priority 2 of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN), and lies within the Tsala Apopka basin (an erosional valley with numerous swamps, marshes, and lakes connected to the Withlacoochee River and its estuaries). The proposal area is dominated by basin marsh interspersed with large areas of mesic hammock. These hammocks are mature forests, with a canopy of large live oaks, a robust midstory, and diverse native groundcover.

Multiple rare species have been documented or reported on-site. The state-listed threatened angle pod (*Gonolobus suberosus*) is common in these hammocks along with rare epiphytes, including the state-endangered comb polypody (*Pecluma plumula*) and Peters' bristle fern (*Trichomanes petersii*). The project area also supports a healthy population of gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and provides ideal habitat for the threatened eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*).

During the project site visit, the Division of Historical Resources (DHR) staff observed many unrecorded archaeological sites within the project area. The Wahoo Swamp site is located within or intersects the boundary of the proposed project and contains archaeological evidence of one of the most significant battlefield sites associated with the Second Seminole War. The Second Seminole War, also known as the Florida War, occurred in Florida from 1835 to 1842 between the United States and groups collectively known as Seminoles. and is considered as the longest and most costly of the Indian conflicts of the United States. Acquisition of this property would ensure that historical and archaeological sites listed within the Florida Master Site File are protected.

If approved for addition to the 2023 Florida Forever Priority List, the project should be considered as an amendment to the Battle of Wahoo Swamp Florida Forever project boundary in the Critical Historical Resources category. All 763 acres proposed for acquisition are considered essential due to the resources documented on the property (see Appendix C). An interagency team conducted a site visit to the project site on June 27, 2022. Information included in this project evaluation report is a result of this site visit.

PURPOSE FOR ACQUISITION

If acquired, the Double G Legacy project will provide protection for the site of the Battle of Wahoo Swamp, a significant battle of the Second Seminole War. Conservation of the ecological resources found within the project will contribute to the protection and enhancement of the water quality of the Withlacoochee River and its associated estuaries and protect critical habitat for imperiled wildlife and rare plant species.

Acquisition of this project would serve to:

- increase the protection of Florida's biodiversity at the species, natural community, and landscape levels
- preserve significant archaeological or historic sites
- conserve and protect a portion of Florida's rural landscape in order to provide and enhance wildlife corridors for rare and imperiled species
- provide surface and groundwater protection and protect natural floodplain functions
- protect, restore, and maintain the quality and natural functions of land, water and wetland systems
- ensure that sufficient quantities of water are available to meet the current and future needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state

LOCATION AND PROXIMITY TO OTHER MANAGED AREAS

The Double G Legacy Florida Forever proposal is 770 acres (calculated through GIS; 763 acres as reported in application) in west-central Sumter County, approximately 5 miles from Bushnell. It is held by a single owner and is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The property is located at the edge of a large complex of wetlands that feed into the Withlacoochee River. The Battle of Wahoo Swamp Florida Forever project lies adjacent to the north edge of the property. Withlacoochee State Forest lies one mile to the north. To the west, the Cummer Family Trust Preserve, Withlacoochee River Corridor Florida Forever BOT project, and Withlacoochee River lie approximately 2 miles away. Acquisition of the proposal would contribute to protection of the Withlacoochee River and the water quality of the estuaries at its mouth, including Big Bend Seagrass Preserve and St. Martin's Marsh Aquatic Preserve.

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI)

This evaluation is based on information gathered from the proposal, aerial photography, US Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' topographic maps, FNAI Florida Cooperative Landcover data (version 3.5), the FNAI database, and information gathered during a June 27, 2022 field survey by FNAI biologists Amy Jenkins and Geoff Parks along with the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) liaison staff.

This proposal lies within the Tsala Apopka basin, an erosional valley with thin surface sands where swamps, marshes, and lakes are common. Much of the project area is underlain by frequently flooded Okeenta muck soils, with the majority of the remainder consisting of poorly drained fine sands, often with bouldery subsurface layers, most commonly from the Kanapaha and Pompano series.

Protection of this property has the potential to help protect water quality on the Withlacoochee River and the marine protected areas it feeds by buffering Wahoo Swamp and associated swamps and marshes from potential future changes in land use. Although not currently connected to existing managed lands, the project has potential to increase the habitat available for wildlife using nearby conservation areas.

The most widespread natural community type (approximately 40% of the property) is basin marsh, which occurs as part of a large network of interconnected marshlands spread throughout the property and extending northeast to the Withlacoochee State Forest and northwest to the Withlacoochee River. These marshes contain sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), big floatingheart (*Nymphoides aquatica*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), areas of alligatorflag (*Thalia geniculata*), Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*), and other herbaceous species. Occasional areas of shrubs and small trees

occur, including Carolina ash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*), coastalplain willow (*Salix caroliniana*), southern bayberry (*Morella cerifera*), and common buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*).

Interspersed with the basin marsh are large areas of mesic hammock. These are mature, diverse forests, generally dominated by large live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), with other canopy species such as swamp laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*), pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*), southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), and basswood (*Tilia americana*). A well-developed midstory includes the canopy species as well as red bay (*Persea borbonia*), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), eastern hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), with smaller shrubs such as saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), bluestem palmetto (*Sabal minor*), American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) frequently throughout. Diverse groundcover includes woodoats (*Chasmanthium sp.*), variable witchgrass (*Dichantherium commutatum*), Spanish needles (*Bidens bipinnata*), white crownbeard (*Verbesina virginica*), woodsgrass (*Oplismenus hirtellus*), whip nutrush (*Scleria triglomerata*), toothpetal false rein orchid (*Habenaria floribunda*), hammock snakeroot (*Ageratina jucunda*), creeping cucumber (*Melothria pendula*), Florida yam (*Dioscorea floridana*), and ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*). The state-listed threatened angle pod (*Gonolobus suberosus*) occurs commonly in these areas. Epiphytes on live oaks include resurrection fern (*Pleopeltis michauxii*), state-endangered comb polypody (*Pecluma plumula*) and Peters' bristle fern (*Trichomanes petersii*). These hammocks had many species in common with upland hardwood forest and may include some areas that could be described as this community, especially the dry upland hardwood forest variant. A few areas such as this were observed on the site visit. Their canopy includes more pignut hickory, southern magnolia, and basswood, and little to no saw palmetto. These areas had a diverse hardwood canopy and midstory, shrubs such as bluestem palmetto, American beautyberry, and wild coffee, and a diverse array of grasses, sedges, and forbs, including Spanish needles, woodoats, partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), nutrush (*Scleria sp.*), Virginia snakeroot (*Aristolochia serpentaria*), sedge (*Carex sp.*), witchgrass, skunk vine (*Paederia foetida*), sarsaparilla vine (*Smilax pumila*), and leafless swallowwort (*Orthosia scoparia*).

Basin swamps, generally with a canopy of swamp tupelo (*Nyssa biflora*) and pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), occur as islands of swamp within the marsh as well as in narrow bands at the interface between the marshes and hammocks. Herbaceous plants on dry and flooded areas included spadeleaf (*Centella asiatica*), spikerush (*Eleocharis sp.*), narrowfruit horned beaksedge (*Rhynchospora inundata*), shortbristle horned beaksedge (*Rhynchospora corniculata*), false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*), water spangles (*Salvinia minima*), camphorweed (*Pluchea sp.*), and pimpernel (*Samolus sp.*). Saplings of canopy species, as well as Carolina ash and common buttonbush, occur occasionally on hammocks and slight elevations within the marsh.

One area of xeric hammock lies on higher ground at the west edge of the project area in an area shown on topographic maps as "Pine Island". Here, sand live oak (*Quercus geminata*) dominates the canopy along with an understory of wild olive (*Cartrema americanum*), rusty staggerbush (*Lyonia ferruginea*), and sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*). Smaller shrubs such as saw palmetto, netted pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*), blue huckleberry (*Gaylussacia frondosa var. tomentosa*), shiny blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites*), and deerberry (*Vaccinium stamineum*) are common, while herbaceous plants were limited, consisting mostly of patches of partridgeberry, and sandyfield beaksedge (*Rhynchospora megalocarpa*).

Improved pasture was uncommon on the proposal area, making up only about 2% of the project acreage. Pastures occur in a small area near the southwestern corner of the proposal, and in small patches at the eastern edge of the project area, abutting more actively grazed portions of the property. These areas have scattered live oak with the herbaceous layer consisting mainly of bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*) with Baldwin's flatsedge (*Cyperus croceus*), Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*), thin paspalum (*Paspalum setaceum*), fireweed (*Erechtites hieraciifolius*), witchgrass, tropical flatsedge

(*Cyperus surinamensis*), licoriceweed (*Scoparia dulcis*), largeflower Mexican clover (*Richardia grandiflora*), foxtail (*Setaria sp.*), earleaf greenbrier (*Smilax auriculata*), and dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*).

A clearing making up about 1% of the project area is similar in composition to improved pasture with bahiagrass, bermudagrass, thin paspalum, and sedges

Table 1. Natural communities and landcover types within Florida Forever proposal

Community or Landcover	Acres	Percent of Proposal
basin marsh	308	40
mesic hammock	232	30
basin swamp	146	19
upland hardwood forest	45	6
xeric hammock	16	2
pasture—improved	17	2
clearing	6	<1
Totals	770	100%

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

This summary provides a resource assessment of the Double G Legacy Florida Forever proposal based on field observations on June 27, 2022, and the results of the GIS analysis. The project is a selected portion of a family ranch that is approximately 3,000 acres. The owners mentioned the possibility of proposing other sections of their land for future Florida Forever projects.

This property is proposed as a less-than-fee acquisition allowing the landowner to continue utilizing the property. The landowner would continue to graze cattle, hunt wildlife, and access the property for outdoor recreation. The owners are avid deer hunters who plant food plots, maintain game feeders, and monitor the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) population with game cameras throughout the property. The property is broken up by large connecting marshes scattered throughout. The FWC GIS Analysis shows marshes account for most of the area (38.5%), followed by mixed wetland hardwoods (29.52%), as well as mixed hardwood-coniferous (20.81%). The analysis also shows small percentages of other communities such as cypress (6.13%), freshwater non-forested wetlands (0.02%), improved pasture (2.04%), mesic flatwoods (2.85%), and prairies and bogs (0.14%).

The landowners are very interested in prescribed burning and the benefits that it brings to wildlife and plant species but have not been able to do so due to the high expense of contract burning. They expressed interest in pursuing this further with the help of the Florida Forest Service (FFS). According to the FWC GIS analysis, the property is considered a Priority 2 within FEGN.

Wildlife species that were observed were white-tailed deer, sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis pratensis*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) with poults, gopher tortoise, swallow-tailed kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), and red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*). Throughout the site visit, many active gopher tortoise (state-designated threatened) burrows were observed. The landowners claim to have seen scrub jays (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) while disking their food plots; however, no scrub habitat was observed on the property. The owners also believed they observed a federally-endangered Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*) and a Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) crossing the trail in front of them on two separate occasions. Unfortunately, they have not been able to capture photographs on their game cameras. The FWC analysis of the property categorizes the bear range as occasional habitat.

The FNAI database shows that 84% of the property is potential habitat for the threatened eastern indigo snake and 45% for the threatened wood stork (*Mycteria americana*). Neither species were observed during the field assessment, although the habitat does look ideal.

Invasive species were also observed on the property. Feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) are destructive to the property and the owners currently manage them by hunting and trapping. Invasive plant species such as tropical soda apple (*Solanum viarum*), Caesar weed (*Urena lobata*), sword fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*), coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*), Chinese tallow (*Triadica sebifera*), and cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) were also observed during the field trip of the site. The landowners were interested in learning more about identification of exotic and invasive species and ways to treat them.

The Florida Landscape Assessment Model (FLAM) performed through FWC's GIS database uses a wide variety of landcover and wildlife species data to rank the landscape value based on the importance of the natural resources and the habitat need for wildlife. The FLAM ranks habitat from 0-10 (with 10 being the most important). The analysis for the Double G Legacy property resulted in a mean FLAM value of 5.7. Approximately 60% of the property is categorized in the Strategic Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA) for species such as Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) and swallow-tailed kite.

A high percentage of the landscape and biodiversity of the parcel ranks 2-3 in priority in the analysis for Critical Lands and Waters identification Project (CLIP). Over half of the property was ranked at priority 3 (59.81%), followed by a large portion of priority 2 (40.1%) with only a very small portion having 0 priority (0.09%). The biodiversity category ranked a high percentage of the property (76.79%) at priority 3. The remaining acreage was classified as priority 2 (20.06%) and 4 (3.15%). All of the property ranked priority 1 in the CLIP terrestrial and waters category. The National Wetlands Inventory data shows 74% classified as wetlands. Ninety-nine percent of the property shows an imperiled species richness for 5-8 imperiled species.

In summary, the acquisition of the Double G Legacy proposal through the Florida Forever program would be beneficial to conservation efforts for the State of Florida. The acquisition of the property would prevent future land development, securing more habitat for native plants and wildlife. The conservation and connection of Double G Legacy and the adjacent Battle of Wahoo Swamp Florida Forever project would benefit surrounding conservation lands and expand an important wildlife corridor.

GOALS, MEASURES AND CRITERIA

GOAL A:

ENHANCE THE COORDINATION AND COMPLETION OF LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS

Measure A1:

The number of acres acquired through the state's land acquisition programs that contribute to the enhancement of essential natural resources, ecosystem service parcels, and connecting linkage corridors as identified and developed by the best available scientific data.

If acquired, all 763 acres would contribute to the enhancement of essential natural resources, ecosystem service parcels and connecting linkage corridors.

Measure A2:

The number of acres protected through the use of alternatives to fee simple acquisition.

The entirety of the project (763 acres) is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition via conservation easement.

Measure A3:

The number of shared acquisition projects among Florida Forever funding partners and partners with other funding sources, including local governments and the federal government.

No funding partners have been identified for this project.

GOAL B:

INCREASE THE PROTECTION OF FLORIDA'S BIODIVERSITY AT THE SPECIES, NATURAL COMMUNITY, AND LANDSCAPE LEVELS

Measure B1:

The number of acres acquired of significant Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas.

The SHCA Florida Forever Conservation Needs layer identifies important remaining habitat conservation needs for 33 terrestrial vertebrates on private lands. Priority 1 and 2 represent habitat for species considered imperiled or critically imperiled in Florida. The Florida Forever Measure Evaluation (FFME) table (Appendix B) reports the site contains approximately 753 acres (98% of site) of SHCA. This is primarily within Priority 5 (67% of site) with the remainder in Priority 3 (30%) and Priority 2 (<1%).

Measure B2:

The number of acres acquired of highest priority conservation areas for Florida's rarest species.

Habitat conservation priorities for 633 of Florida's rarest species were mapped and divided into six priority classes. The FFME reports the proposed project contains approximately 770 acres (100% of site) of rare species habitat. The habitat is divided between Priority 6 (32% of site), Priority 4 (27%), Priority 5 (22%), and Priority 2 (14%), with the remainder in Priority 3 (5%).

The following table lists the acres of habitat for each species that may be found on the site, based on the FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities. Please note that habitats for these species overlap, so that the sum total of habitat for all species is more than the total acreage of the priority conservation areas. Acreage for aquatic species includes a terrestrial buffer.

Table 2. Rare species habitat based on FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities

Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Rank	Acres
<i>Asplenium verecundum</i>	modest spleenwort	G1	37
<i>Asplenium x plenum</i>	ruffled spleenwort	G1Q	104
<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>	eastern indigo snake	G3	378
<i>Mustela frenata peninsulae</i>	Florida long-tailed weasel	G5T3?	745
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	wood stork	G4	349

Measure B3:

The number of acres acquired of significant landscapes, landscape linkages, and conservation corridors, giving priority to completing linkages

The FFME reports approximately 769 acres (100%) of the proposed project contributes to protection of ecological greenways with 100% of the acreage falling within Priority 2 areas. Prioritization is based on such factors as importance for wide-ranging species like Florida panther and Florida black bear, importance for maintaining a connected reserve network, and riparian corridors.

Measure B4:

The number of acres acquired of under-represented native ecosystems.

The Florida Forever natural community analysis includes only those communities that are under-represented on existing conservation lands. This analysis provides a conservative estimate of the extent of these communities, because it identifies only relatively undisturbed portions of these communities that occur within their historic range. The Florida Forever Measures table lists the acreages of under-represented natural communities found on the site. Based on this analysis, the Double G Legacy proposal area contains 45 acres of upland hardwood forest (6% of the site).

Measure B5:

The number of landscape-sized protection areas of at least 50,000 acres that exhibit a mosaic of predominantly intact or restorable natural communities established through new acquisition projects, or augmentations to previous projects.

The Double G Legacy proposal would not contribute to a contiguous landscape-sized protection area of >50,000 acres. Several larger conservation lands, such as Withlacoochee State Forest and Beville Ranch Conservation Easements, are in the general vicinity but disjunct from the proposal.

Measure B6:

The percentage increase in the number of occurrences of imperiled species on publicly managed conservation areas.

This site supports habitat for three rare plant species—anglepod (*Gonolobus suberosus*), plume polypody (*Pecluma plumula*) and Peters’ bristle fern. All three of these species were found during the site visit in the mesic hammock community. One rare animal, the swallow-tailed kite, was observed during the site visit. More extensive surveys may reveal additional rare species.

The FFME table lists the number of Element Occurrences by Global Rank (G-rank) that are found on the proposal. Note that the number of occurrences does not necessarily match the number of species in the following table because a) some species may have more than one occurrence on the proposal site, or b) some species observed on site do not meet the criteria for addition to the FNAI database at this time. The table below contains species falling into any of these observational categories, as well as species gleaned from other sources (e.g., Florida Breeding Bird Atlas) with different degrees of locational precision. Rarity rankings are in the following order: FNAI global (G, T) and state (S) ranks, federal status, state status. Species ranks and conservation status are described in Appendix D.

Table 3. Rare plants and animals documented or reported to occur within the proposed project

Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Status
Rare plants documented on site					
<i>Gonolobus suberosus</i>	anglepod				T
<i>Pecluma plumula</i>	plume polypody	G5	S2		E
<i>Trichomanes petersii</i>	Peters’ bristle fern	G4G5	S1S2		
Additional rare plants reported on site by applicant					
None					
Rare animals documented on site					
<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>	swallow-tailed kite	G5	S2		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Status
Additional rare animals reported on site by applicant					
<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	American alligator	G5	S4	SAT	FT(S/A)

GOAL C:

PROTECT, RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF NATURAL FUNCTIONS OF LAND, WATER, AND WETLAND SYSTEMS OF THE STATE

Measure C1:

The number of acres of publicly-owned land identified as needing restoration; enhancement, and management, acres undergoing restoration or enhancement; acres with restoration activities completed, and acres managed to maintain such restored or enhanced conditions; the number of acres which represent actual or potential imperiled species habitat; the number of acres which are available pursuant to a management plan to restore, enhance, repopulate, and manage imperiled species habitat; and the number of acres of imperiled species habitat managed, restored, and enhanced, repopulated, or acquired.

The property is offered for less-than-fee acquisition, intended to be utilized in a manner consistent with existing uses. The overwhelming majority of the property is naturally vegetated and in relatively good condition.

Measure C4:

The number of acres acquired that protect natural floodplain functions.

According to the FFME, approximately 738 acres (96%) of the proposed project may contribute to the protection of natural floodplain function. This area is mostly divided between Priority 3 (58% of site) and Priority 2 (38%), with a small amount (<1% of the site) of Priority 4. Priority 1 areas are the most natural with the lowest intensity land uses.

Measure C5:

The number of acres acquired that protect surface waters of the State.

The FFME reports that 770 acres (100%) of the proposed project could provide protection for those surface waters of the State that currently remain in good condition. This area is divided between Priority 5 (53% of site), Priority 6 (35%), and Priority 3 (12%). These areas represent acreage that contributes to the protection of state-designated Outstanding Florida Waters, springs, rare fish habitat, or other surface waters.

Measure C8:

The number of acres of functional wetland systems protected.

The FFME reports approximately 572 acres (74%) of the proposed project would provide protection for functional wetland systems. This area is divided between Priority 3 (42% of site), Priority 2 (32%), and a small amount of Priority 4 (<1% of site). Priority 1 areas are the most natural with the lowest intensity land uses.

Measure C11:

The number of acres of public conservation lands in which upland invasive, exotic plants are under maintenance control.

Invasive exotic plant control needs of the property appear to be relatively minor, although several species were observed that could negatively impact the health of the natural communities onsite if not

controlled. In particular, small amounts of skunk vine, Chinese tallow and isolated patches of cogongrass would be important to treat and monitor. A baseline assessment to determine the full extent of invasive plant species is warranted if acquisition of the easement occurs.

GOAL D:

ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF WATER ARE AVAILABLE TO MEET THE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF NATURAL SYSTEMS AND THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE

Measure D1:

The number of acres acquired which provide retention and storage of surface water in naturally occurring storage areas, such as lakes and wetlands, consistent with the maintenance of water resources or water supplies and consistent with district water supply plans.

The Double G Legacy project is located within the Withlacoochee River basin and approximately three miles from the Withlacoochee River. Protection of the project area would benefit water quality and quantity within the Withlacoochee River watershed, a Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) priority.

Measure D2:

The quantity of water made available through the water resource development component of a district water supply plan for which a water management district is responsible.

The Double G Legacy project is located within the District’s Northern Planning Region. Acquisition of the project area would benefit the water quality and quantity of the Withlacoochee River, the only major river system in the planning region (SWFWMD 2020).

Measure D3:

The number of acres acquired of groundwater recharge areas critical to springs, sinks, aquifers, other natural systems, or water supply.

The property is not in a restoration plan area, but would provide surface and ground water protection.

Table 4. Spatial Analysis for Potential Water Quality Benefits of Double G Legacy

Categories	Scoring Criteria	Project Score
DEP High Profile Springs (In 1,2,3 or > spring sheds)	12, 24, 36	0
DEP Select Agricultural Land Use (0-30%, >30-65%, >65%)	4,8,12	4
DEP Florida Aquifer Vulnerability (FAVA)	4,7,10	10
DEP Special Nutrient Impaired WBIDs	9	0
DEP Distance to Major Lakes (100, 500, 1000 meters)	8,7,6	0
DEP Springsheds or within 5 miles	10, 7	0
DEP BMAPs	10	0
DEP Distance to Major Rivers (100, 500, 1000 meters)	6,5,4	0
Total Possible	101	14

GIS Evaluation score is converted to a 1 to 5 value (low to high)

FINAL DEAR SCORE = 1 - Low water quality protection benefits

GOAL E:

INCREASE NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED PUBLIC RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Measures E1-E3

The Double G Legacy project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition with no public access. However, the landowners indicated they may consider hosting Operation Outdoor Freedom hunts on the property (administered by FFS).

GOAL F:

PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR HISTORIC SITES

Measure F1:

The increase in the number of and percentage of historic and archaeological properties listed in the Florida Master Site File or National Register of Historic Places which are protected or preserved for public use.

As a less-than-fee project, the Double G Legacy Florida Forever project would not increase the number or percentage of historic and archaeological properties listed in the Florida Master Site File or National Register of Historic Places which are preserved for public use. However, through a conservation easement agreement that stipulates cultural resource protection, the Double G Legacy Florida Forever project would protect historic and archaeological sites that are listed in the Florida Master Site File.

Measure F2:

The increase in the number and percentage of historic and archaeological properties that are in state ownership.

Double G legacy would not meet Measure F2, as the number and percentage of historic and archaeological properties on the project would remain privately owned.

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

According to the DHR's Florida Master Site File, there is currently one archaeological site located within or intersecting the boundary of the Double G Legacy Florida Forever project.

Notably, the northern portion of the Double G Legacy Florida Forever project intersects with the Wahoo Swamp archaeological site (SM567). The Wahoo Swamp site contains archaeological evidence of one of the most significant sites associated with the Second Seminole War. To date, only a portion of this property has been professionally surveyed for archaeological and/or historical sites.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS:

During the field review of the Double G legacy Florida Forever project, staff observed many unrecorded archaeological sites within the project area. There is a high potential for numerous unrecorded sites to exist on the Double G Legacy property. Should any artifacts be discovered on the project in the future, DHR recommends leaving them in place and contacting DHR's Public Lands Archaeology Program.

GOAL G:

INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF FORESTLAND AVAILABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

This project would increase the amount of forest land under protection. About half of this property is swamp, hydric or mesic hammock. These plant communities could play a role in bird migrations or provide habitat for seasonal or non-migratory birds. With proper management, this property will retain its value if native tree species are encouraged through regular control of invasive species.

Measure G1:

The number of acres acquired that are available for sustainable forest management.

The FFME reports approximately 38 acres (5% of site) could be available for sustainable forest management, divided between Priority 3 (22 acres) and Priority 5 (16 acres). Prioritization is based on 4 criteria set by FFS: whether trees are natural or planted, size of tract, distance to market, and hydrology. Priority 5 areas are considered “potential” pinelands; agricultural areas that could be restored to pineland.

Measure G2:

The number of acres of state owned forestland managed for economic return in accordance with current best management practices.

The project proposal contains no forestland managed for economic return.

Measure G3:

The number of acres of forestland acquired that will serve to maintain natural groundwater recharge functions.

The FFME reports approximately 22 acres (3%) would provide forestland to maintain natural groundwater recharge functions.

Measure G4:

The percentage and number of acres identified for restoration actually restored by reforestation.

This property requires no reforestation. Some of the site’s forests appear young with early successional trees (likely due to recent clearing). Over time, climax forest consisting of large live oaks, magnolia, cypress, and others could provide better habitat for rare and common species. All appropriate tree species are present.

FLORIDA FOREVER CRITERIA

The proposed project meets the following Florida Forever criteria (§ 259.105, F.S.)

- the project meets multiple goals
- the project has significant archaeological or historic value
- the project has a significant portion of its land area in imminent danger of development, in imminent danger of losing its significant natural attributes or recreational open space, or in imminent danger of subdivision which would result in multiple ownership and make acquisition of the project costly or less likely to be accomplished
- the project may be acquired, in whole or in part, using alternatives to fee simple, including but not limited to, tax incentives, mitigation funds, or other revenues; the purchase of development rights, hunting rights, agricultural or silvicultural rights, or mineral rights; or obtaining conservation easements or flowage easements

The Acquisition and Restoration Council shall give increased priority to:

- projects that can be acquired in less than fee ownership, such as a permanent conservation easement
- projects that contribute to improving the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater

MANAGEMENT

If acquired as a conservation easement, primary management responsibility would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site’s management would occur to confirm continued compliance

with the conditions of the easement. Monitoring would be coordinated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Division of State Lands (DSL), Office of Environmental Services (OES).

FUNDING SOURCES

Florida Forever would be the funding source.

OWNERSHIP PATTERN AND ACQUISITION PLANNING

Title and Legal Access, Jurisdictional and Sovereignty Lands, Legal Issues

Record of title, a designation of jurisdictional and sovereignty lands and any other legal Issues will be determined at the time of acquisition and are not known at this time.

Known Encumbrances (easement, long-term leases, restrictive covenants, etc.)

The easements and encumbrances of record would be determined during the appraisal mapping. A current title insurance commitment would be obtained, or the owner's title insurance policy would be reviewed if the policy is available. The easements and encumbrances would be depicted or noted on the appraisal map.

Description and location of hazardous waste sites, dumps, borrow pits

There are no apparent contamination sites within the project based on the application form.

Estimated Cost of Appraisal and Mapping

DEP Bureau of Appraisal estimates \$10,000 to \$20,000 in appraisal fees.

Acquisition Phases

Subject to funding, the Double G Legacy Florida Forever project will be phased based upon price.

GOVERNMENT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Contribution to Recreation and Open Space Needs

Low to moderate: The project area is wetlands or open water. Dry areas contain roads, wooded area or practically cleared fields. The potential for open space opportunities is moderate, but recreational opportunities are limited because the property owner has no desire to open the property to the public. The project area is home to many native trees, shrubs and grasses, including Cypress, Pine, Oak, and Palms. The project area is also home to many different species and their habitats, including deer, bobcats, pigs, turtles, turkey, otters, alligators, fish, snakes, and several species of birds.

Potential for Losing Significant Natural Attributes or Recreational Open Spaces

Low to none: Project area is privately owned by a family, who has no desire to sell the land or open the land to the public. The family is exploring financial options to continue managing the land while enjoying the land.

Potential for Being Subdivided

Low to none: The property is part of a family-owned ranch land with no desire to sell the land or open the land to the public.

Existing Land Uses and Future Land Use Designations

Agricultural 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres; Future Land Use: Agricultural 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres. The property is a mosaic of wetlands and uplands.

Development Potential

Based on the Sumter County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use designation, the subject property has a development potential of 84 residential dwelling units.

Transportation Planning Issues

The proposed project is located within Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 5 and is located approximately one mile from State Highway 48, a designated evacuation route. While the Department finds no adverse impact to this proposed project, there should be coordination with the appropriate FDOT District staff during the acquisition process to ensure that issues related to the transportation system and partnering opportunities are addressed and incorporated into the management plan as appropriate.

REFERENCES CITED

Brooks, H. K. 1981. *Guide to the physiographic divisions of Florida*. Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, University of Florida.

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). 2020. *2020 Regional Water Supply Plan - Northern Planning Region*. Brooksville; Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Southwest Florida Water Management District. *What is a watershed? Withlacoochee River Watershed Excursion map*, Southwest Florida Watershed District . Retrieved from <https://www4.swfwmd.state.fl.us/with/map/>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff in the DEP's DSL and FNAI determined the final project recommendations. Sine Murray and Hannah Turbiville in DSL's OES were responsible for the overall coordination of this report, with contributions from the following:

- Florida Natural Areas Inventory – Geoffrey Parks & Amy Jenkins
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission – Tiffany Mobley, Chris Green & Jacqueline Bucheck
- Florida Forest Service – Catherine Ingram & Vince Morris
- Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources – Joshua Goodwin, Jason O'Donoughue & Brandon Ackermann
- Florida Department of Transportation – Ben Naselius
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Barbara Powell
- DEP Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration – Kevin Coyne
- DEP DSL, Bureau of Appraisal

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Final FF measures table: Report requirement 259.105 (15)d, prepared by FNAI

Double G Legacy: Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20220803

GIS ACRES = 770

MEASURES	Resource Acres ^a	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	3	< 1%
Priority 3	232	30%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	518	67%
Total Acres	753	98%
B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	108	14%
Priority 3	35	5%
Priority 4	207	27%
Priority 5	170	22%
Priority 6	250	32%
Total Acres	770	100%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	769	100%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	769	100%
B4: Under-represented Natural Communities		
Upland Glade (G1)	0	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	0	0%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0	0%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0	0%
Sandhill (G3)	0	0%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	0	0%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	45	6%
Total Acres	45	6%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	0	
G5	0	
Total	0	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	293	38%
Priority 3	444	58%
Priority 4	2	< 1%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	738	96%

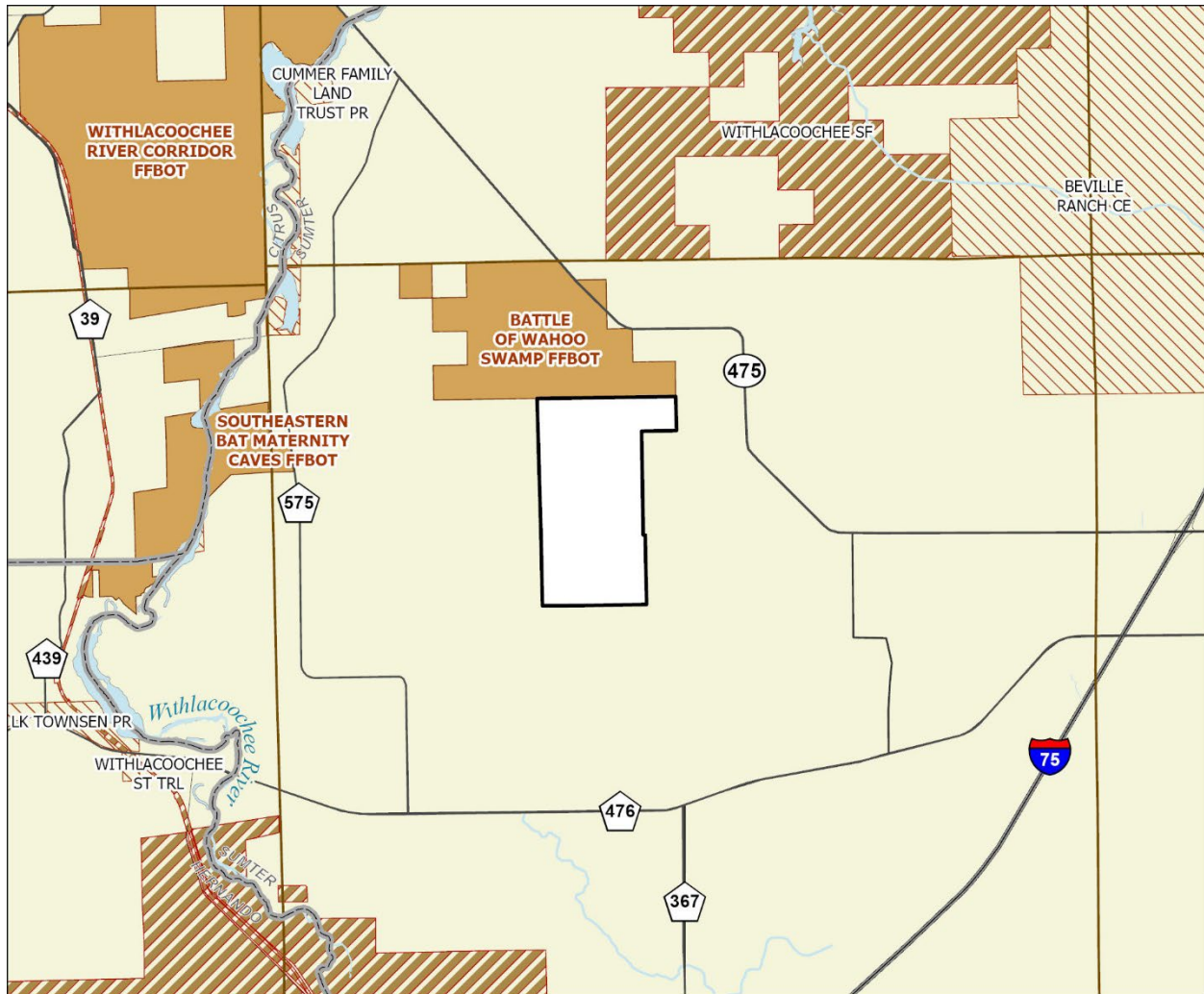
MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres ^a	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	90	12%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	410	53%
Priority 6	270	35%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	770	100%
C7: Fragile Coastal Resources		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0	0%
Coastal Wetlands	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
C8: Functional Wetlands		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	248	32%
Priority 3	323	42%
Priority 4	1	< 1%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	572	74%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	19	2%
Priority 2	408	53%
Priority 3	336	44%
Priority 4	8	1%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	770	100%
E2: Recreational Trails (miles)		
<small>(prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)</small>		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
Total Miles	0.0	
F2: Arch. & Historical Sites (number)		
	1	1 site
G1: Sustainable Forestry		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	22	3%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	16	2%
Total Acres	38	5%
G3: Forestland for Recharge		
	22	3%

^aAcres of each resource in the project and percentage of project represented by each resource are listed except where noted. This analysis converts site boundary into pixels, which causes slight differences from GIS acres; this effect is most noticeable on small sites.

Appendix B:

Final FF proposal boundary maps: Report requirement 259.105 (15)k, prepared by FNAI

B1: Florida Forever map



DOUBLE G LEGACY FLORIDA FOREVER PROPOSAL

SUMTER COUNTY

-  Proposed Florida Forever BOT Project
-  Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands

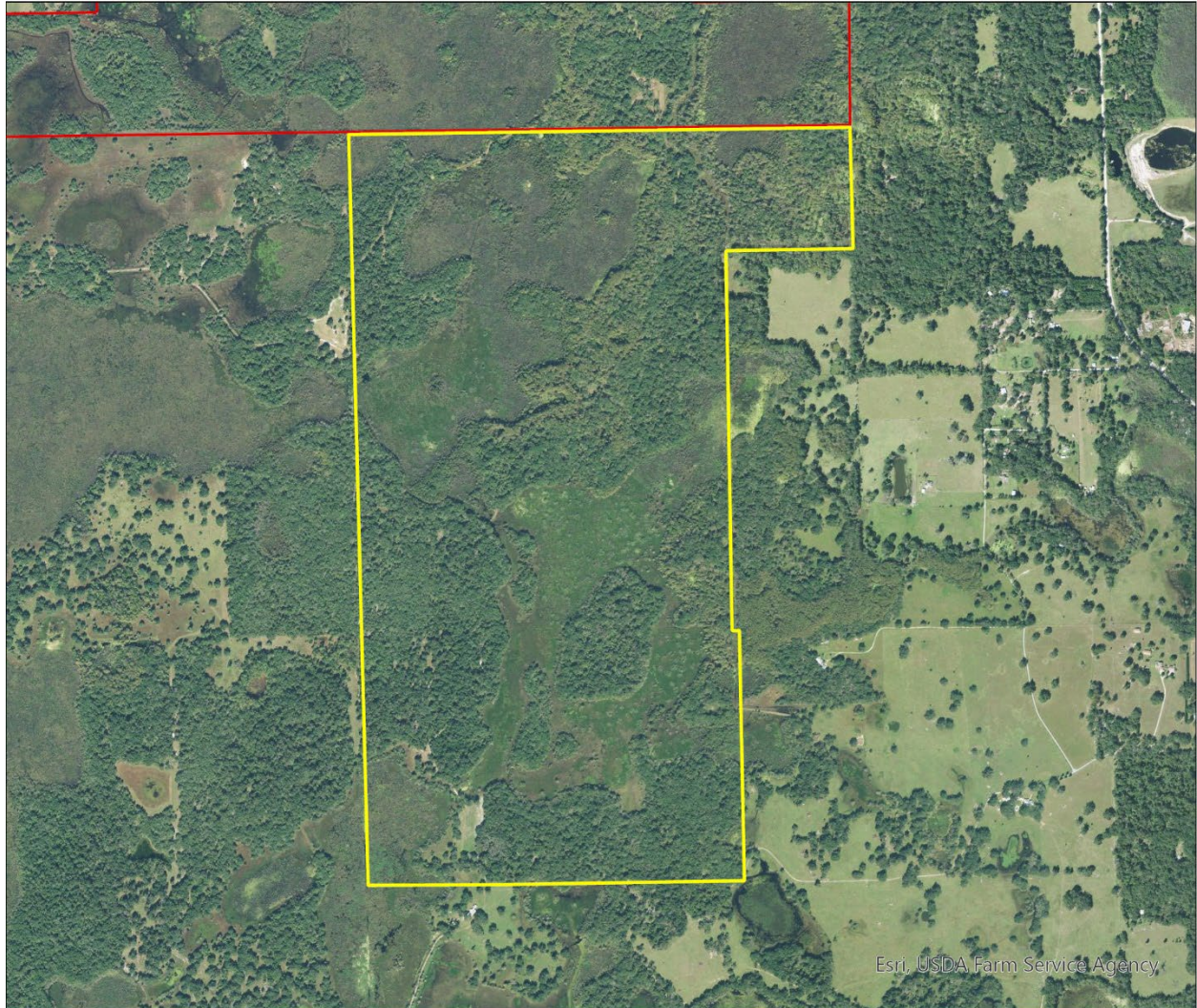


JULY 2022

B2: Aerial map

Double G Legacy Florida Forever Proposal

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSAL BOUNDARY AS OF JULY 2022





Map Produced by: N. Pasco, July 2022

Background: USA NAIP Imagery Resolution = 1.0 meter



1018 Thomasville Road
 Suite 200-C
 Tallahassee, Florida 32303
 850-224-8207
 fax 850-681-9364
 www.fnai.org

	Florida Forever Proposal Boundary
	Florida Forever BOT Projects



Appendix C:

PROPERTY ID #'S FOR FINAL RECOMMENDED BOUNDARY

COUNTY	PARCEL ID	OWNER	ACRES PER TAX CARD	JUST VALUE	ASSESSED VALUE	PARCEL DESIGNATION
Sumter	M09-001	Double G Legacy LP	120	\$371,910	\$3,600	Essential
Sumter	M09-002	Double G Legacy LP	80	\$70,850	\$2,950	Essential
Sumter	M09-003	Double G Legacy LP	40	\$159,390	\$2,380	Essential
Sumter	M09-004	Double G Legacy LP	200	\$619,850	\$7,600	Essential
Sumter	M09-005	Double G Legacy LP	80	\$283,360	\$2,400	Essential
Sumter	M16-003*	Double G Legacy LP	83	\$298,686	\$46,490	Essential
Sumter	M16-001*	Wilkes Gail G	160	\$492,741	\$9,417	Essential
			763	\$2,296,787	\$74,838	

* Partial or Prorated Parcel

Appendix D:**Imperiled Species FNAI Ranking Definitions**

FNAI
Definitions of imperiled species ranks and conservation status

Using a ranking system developed by NatureServe and the Natural Heritage Program Network, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory assigns two ranks for each element. The global rank is based on an element's worldwide status; the state rank is based on the status of the element in Florida. Element ranks are based on many factors, the most important ones being estimated number of Element Occurrences (EOs), estimated abundance (number of individuals for species; area for natural communities), geographic range, estimated number of adequately protected EOs, relative threat of destruction, and ecological fragility.

FNAI GLOBAL ELEMENT RANK

- G1** = Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or less than 1000 individuals) or because of extreme vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor.
- G2** = Imperiled globally because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or less than 3000 individuals) or because of vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor.
- G3** = Either very rare and local throughout its range (21-100 occurrences or less than 10,000 individuals) or found locally in a restricted range or vulnerable to extinction from other factors.
- G4** = Apparently secure globally (may be rare in parts of range).
- G5** = Demonstrably secure globally.
- GH** = Of historical occurrence throughout its range, may be rediscovered (e.g., ivory-billed woodpecker).
- GX** = Believed to be extinct throughout range.
- GXC** = Extirpated from the wild but still known from captivity or cultivation.
- G#?** = Tentative rank (e.g., G2?).
- G#G#** = Range of rank; insufficient data to assign specific global rank (e.g., G2G3).
- G#T#** = Rank of a taxonomic subgroup such as a subspecies or variety; the G portion of the rank refers to the entire species and the T portion refers to the specific subgroup; numbers have same definition as above (e.g., G3T1).
- G#Q** = Rank of questionable species - ranked as species but questionable whether it is species or subspecies; numbers have same definition as above (e.g., G2Q).
- G#T#Q** = Same as above, but validity as subspecies or variety is questioned.
- GU** = Unrankable; due to a lack of information no rank or range can be assigned (e.g., GUT2).
- GNA** = Ranking is not applicable because the element is not a suitable target for conservation (e.g. a hybrid species).
- GNR** = Element not yet ranked (temporary).
- GNRTNR** = Neither the element nor the taxonomic subgroup has yet been ranked.

FNAI STATE ELEMENT RANK

- S1** = Critically imperiled in Florida because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or less than 1000 individuals) or because of extreme vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor.
- S2** = Imperiled in Florida because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or less than 3000 individuals) or because of vulnerability to extinction due to some natural or man-made factor.
- S3** = Either very rare and local in Florida (21-100 occurrences or less than 10,000 individuals) or found locally in a restricted range or vulnerable to extinction from other factors.
- S4** = Apparently secure in Florida (may be rare in parts of range).
- S5** = Demonstrably secure in Florida.
- SH** = Of historical occurrence in Florida, possibly extirpated, but may be rediscovered (e.g., ivory-billed woodpecker).
- SX** = Believed to be extirpated throughout Florida.
- SU** = Unrankable; due to a lack of information no rank or range can be assigned.
- SNA** = State ranking is not applicable because the element is not a suitable target for conservation (e.g. a hybrid species).
- SNR** = Element not yet ranked (temporary).

FEDERAL LEGAL STATUS

Legal status information provided by FNAI for information only. For official definitions and lists of protected species, consult the relevant federal agency.

Definitions derived from U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973, Sec. 3. Note that the federal status given by FNAI refers only to Florida

2019-04-19

Page 2

FNAI
Definitions of imperiled species ranks and conservation status

populations and that federal status may differ elsewhere.

C = Candidate species for which federal listing agencies have sufficient information on biological vulnerability and threats to support proposing to list the species as Endangered or Threatened.
E = Endangered: species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
E, T = Species currently listed endangered in a portion of its range but only listed as threatened in other areas
E, PDL = Species currently listed endangered but has been proposed for delisting.
E, PT = Species currently listed endangered but has been proposed for listing as threatened.
E, XN = Species currently listed endangered but tracked population is a non-essential experimental population.
T = Threatened: species likely to become Endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
PE = Species proposed for listing as endangered
PS = Partial status: some but not all of the species' infraspecific taxa have federal
PT = Species proposed for listing as threatened
SAT = Treated as threatened due to similarity of appearance to a species which is federally listed such that enforcement personnel have difficulty in attempting to differentiate between the listed and unlisted species.
SC = Not currently listed, but considered a "species of concern" to USFWS.

STATE LEGAL STATUS

Provided by FNAI for information only. For official definitions and lists of protected species, consult the relevant state agency.

Animals: Definitions derived from "Florida's Endangered Species and Species of Special Concern, Official Lists" published by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 1 August 1997, and subsequent updates.

C = Candidate for listing at the Federal level by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FE = Listed as Endangered Species at the Federal level by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FT = Listed as Threatened Species at the Federal level by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FXN = Federal listed as an experimental population in Florida
FT(S/A) = Federal Threatened due to similarity of appearance
ST = State population listed as Threatened by the FFWCC. Defined as a species, subspecies, or isolated population which is acutely vulnerable to environmental alteration, declining in number at a rapid rate, or whose range or habitat is decreasing in area at a rapid rate and as a consequence is destined or very likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future.
SSC = Listed as Species of Special Concern by the FFWCC. Defined as a population which warrants special protection, recognition, or consideration because it has an inherent significant vulnerability to habitat modification, environmental alteration, human disturbance, or substantial human exploitation which, in the foreseeable future, may result in its becoming a threatened species. (SSC* for *Pandion haliaetus* (Osprey) indicates that this status applies in Monroe county only.)
N = Not currently listed, nor currently being considered for listing.

Plants: Definitions derived from Sections 581.011 and 581.185(2), Florida Statutes, and the Preservation of Native Flora of Florida Act, 5B-40.001. FNAI does not track all state-regulated plant species; for a complete list of state-regulated plant species, call Florida Division of Plant Industry, 352-372-3505 or see: <<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/>>.

E = Endangered: species of plants native to Florida that are in imminent danger of extinction within the state, the survival of which is unlikely if the causes of a decline in the number of plants continue; includes all species determined to be endangered or threatened pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act.
T = Threatened: species native to the state that are in rapid decline in the number of plants within the state, but which have not so decreased in number as to cause them to be Endangered.
N = Not currently listed, nor currently being considered for listing.

Appendix E:

Site Visit Photos



1. *Mesic hammock*



2. *Mosaic of basin marsh and mesic hammock*



3. Joshua Goodwin of DHR (left) discusses a historical finding with landowner (right) with active gopher tortoise burrow in background



5. Improved pasture



6. Peters' bristle fern (*Trichomanes petersii*)



7. Large live-oak with state-endangered comb polypody (*Pecluma plumula*) among other rare epiphytes